

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in the application.

Claim Objections

The claims 1-12 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In regard to claim 1, the examiner points out that it is stated that the working stroke of the honing tool is adjusted continuously at least toward the end of the step of machining. In examiner's opinion, this is contradictory as the stroke is either adjusted continuously or toward the end of the working stroke.

The claim language has been changed such that "continuously" is now positioned in front of "adjusting" so that it becomes clear that "continuously" and "adjusting" are linked. The phrase "continuously adjusting" refers to the embodiments described in connection with Figs. 5 and 6. The specification (paragraphs 0025 and 0026) discloses that the honing process can be performed with a continuous change (line 3 of paragraph 0026), i.e., adjustment, of the upper honing position and/or the lower honing position (10.1 and 10.2), as illustrated in Figs. 5 and 6. By continuously changing the positions (i.e., continuously adjusting or increasing the working stroke), a gradual or continuous transition between the honed and the unhoned sections is provided. While in paragraph 0025 it is set forth that the last machining (honing) strokes are increased (continuously adjusted), it is also set forth in paragraph 0026 that this continuous adjustment can be carried out so as to begin even significantly before the end of the honing process. The amended claim language is believed to reflect this honing method variation correctly.

The examiner further states that feeding of the guides apparently is not claimed in claim 1 prior to lines 19-20 of the claim. The feeding of the guides has now been introduced into the first method step so as to provide proper antecedence. In order to provide for a more concise claim language, the feature of the last paragraph of claim 1 has been incorporated into the third method step.

The term "force-guided" has been changed to "force-controlled" (see paragraphs 0022 and 0023).

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Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims pursuant to 35 USC 112 are therefore respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 1-12 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112. It is believed that the amendments to the claims, in light of the discussion of the embodiments in question, have overcome the rejections.

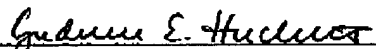
Claims 1-12 are believed to be allowable. Should the Examiner have any further objections or suggestions, the undersigned would appreciate to be **contacted by e-mail** to discuss appropriate amendments to place the application into condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited.

Authorization is herewith given to charge any fees or any shortages in any fees required during prosecution of this application and not paid by other means to Patent and Trademark Office deposit account 50-1199.

Respectfully submitted on May 12, 2005,


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